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Planning Chart Has Movable Pieces to Gauge Progress

By STACY V. JONES

WASHINGTON, March 20 — A lawyer whose hobby is mathematics has patented an "everyman's analog computer."

It can be used in the planning of any project from construction of an aircraft carrier to the marketing of a new toothbrush.

The invention is a desk-sized mechanical chart with movable pieces. The aluminum board has horizontal slots in which gauges are placed between dividers known as fences. Surveying it as he might a chess board, an executive can tell how his project is going.

Stanley Mendell, the Philadelphia inventor, says that industry has welcomed his graphic presentation because it eliminates the usual complex mathematical computations often made with electronic-digital computers. He has sold his Planalog to more than 100 large concerns. An oil company bought one for each of 11 refineries.

If the project is construction of a building, the first activity may be excavation and clearing. This is represented by a plastic gauge fitted in a slot at the left of the board. The length of the gauge shows the duration of this preliminary work, perhaps three weeks.

Subsequent specific jobs are represented by other gauges across the board, ending at the right with final inspection. The positions of the gauges and fences show the relationship of

all the steps, and the order in which the vital ones must be completed.

While he was reviewing contracts for the General Electric Company, Mr. Mendell set out to simplify planning. He built his first board in the basement of his home in Haddonfield, N.J.

In 1962, he organized Management Studies, Inc., which now manufactures the equipment in Philadelphia.

A Planalog set costing \$390 can integrate 300 activities or jobs, and for bigger projects a number of sets can be combined. By labeling the gauges, the board can be adapted for any field, such as research and development, manufacturing, advertising or training.

Patent 3,124,885, granted this week to Mr. Mendell, is assigned to the company, of which he is president.

Analog Computer Gets Patent



Stanley Mendell, left, inventor of desk-sized computer and president of Management Studies, Inc., with Donald S. Waters, center, a vice president, and Robert W. Welch 2d, a director. The device, characterized as a mechanical chart, has the trade name of Planalog.